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SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 4 August 1999 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring to your attention the still unresolved issue of the murder of the staff of the Consulate-General of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic News Agency's correspondent in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan, by the Taliban forces in the wake of their offensive against that northern Afghan city in August 1998. While we are approaching the first anniversary of this tragic event, the Taliban continue to stubbornly disregard the rules of international law and have yet to heed the demand of the international community to apprehend and help to bring the perpetrators of this heinous crime to justice.

It may be recalled that this horrific tragedy raised extreme international concern and outrage, particularly in the United Nations, over the Taliban's inhumane and unlawful behaviour. The Security Council, in its resolution 1193 (1998) condemned, in the most unambiguous terms, the atrocities committed by the Taliban, throughout Afghanistan, including the capture of the Consulate-General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Mazar-e-Sharif. Following the admission by the Taliban leadership of the massacre of the Iranian diplomats and journalist, the Security Council, in its resolution 1214 (1998), condemned, inter alia, the capture of the Iranian Consulate-General and the murder of the Iranian diplomats and a journalist in Mazar-e-Sharif and stressed that those acts constituted flagrant violations of international law and, furthermore, called upon "the Taliban to cooperate with the United Nations in investigating these crimes with a view to prosecuting those responsible".

* A/54/150.

In resolution 53/203 A of 18 December 1998, the General Assembly strongly condemned the killing of the Iranian diplomatic and consular staff and the journalist in Mazar-e-Sharif, and urged the Taliban "to inform the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Nations about the result of its investigations to date", and called upon the Taliban "to cooperate fully with an international investigation of the murder of the Iranian diplomats and the Islamic Republic News Agency correspondent with a view to prosecuting the guilty parties". The same demand had also been made in the statement of the ministerial meeting of the "six plus two" group at United Nations Headquarters on 21 September 1998.

In this connection, I should also like to note the reference in the report of the Secretary-General (S/1998/1109) to the meeting of 14 October 1998 between the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan and the Taliban's leader, at which the latter "confirmed his commitment to the continued investigation by the Taliban of the killing of the Iranian diplomats and the Iranian journalist in Mazar-e-Sharif and promised that the Taliban authorities would support and cooperate with an international mission of inquiry into all circumstances surrounding the fate of the above-mentioned slain Iranians". The report, furthermore, expressed the sincere hope of the Secretary-General that his "Special Envoy's achievements will continue to be built upon, inter alia, by prosecuting those responsible for the murders ...".

Despite such undertakings and promises of cooperation by the Taliban leadership to help bring those responsible for the murders to justice, I must inform you that the Taliban response has thus far been totally unacceptable to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Their response has been marked by procrastination and stonewalling, indicating a lack of political will to pursue the matter seriously.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to pursue vigorously the case of its slain diplomats and journalist through all possible means, including the office of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for Afghanistan, until it is settled satisfactorily. We earnestly hope that the Security Council will take resolute and effective measures to implement its previous decisions in this regard and thereby persuade the Taliban to fulfil their obligations in helping to bring the murderers of the Iranian diplomats and journalist to justice, so that this sensitive and outstanding issue can be resolved without further delay.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 50 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hadi NEJAD-HOSSEINIAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative